

11
*The Goodness and Love of God manifested
to a sinful World in the Gift of his Son.*

2/6
A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT
C H A T H A M,
O N
CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1737.

By *T H O M A S P I E T Y.*



L O N D O N :

Printed for *T H O M A S P I E T Y*, in *Chatham*; and
sold by *J. N O O N*, at the *White-Hart*, near *Mer-*
cers-Chapel, in *Cheapside*.

[Price Six-Pence.]

THE GARDEN AND THE GARDENERS
IN A PLEASANT AND DELICIOUS COUNTRY

SEYMOUR

CHATHAM



CHRISTMAS DAY, 1737.

THOMAS FLETCHER

LONDON:

Printed by J. Johnson, at the W. Lane-Hall, near St. Pauls Church, in Cheap.

[1737-38]



EPHES. II. 4, 5.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.



GOD Almighty, who is an inexhaustible fountain of goodness and beneficence, and who delights in the happiness of his creatures, has most wonderfully displayed that glorious and adorable attribute of goodness in the universal government of the moral world: But the most amazing instance of his love, is that which we this day commemorate, even the sending his only begotten Son into our sinful world, to reform the lives and manners of men, and to expel that darkness, ignorance, and superstition, which seem to have spread themselves universally, and almost wholly extinguished that duty, love, honour, and reverence, which were justly his due. Yet, at the same time, such was the baseness and ingratitude of those to whom this Son of God personally appeared, in a manner so exactly agreeable to the predictions of their own prophets, on whom they professed to rely for the proof of the Messiah's coming into the world; and notwithstanding the exemplariness of his life, and the purity of his doctrine, so that his very enemies acknowledged *that he spake as never man spake*; and though he gave the most undeniable evidences of his divine mission, by the greatness and number of his miracles; yet such was their ignorance, mix'd

with an inveterate hatred and malice, that although they found no just cause of death in him, (upon which *Pilate* would have released him) they cried out, with loud exclamations, *Crucify him, crucify him; let his blood be upon us, and upon our children*; there was nothing that would satisfy their savage minds, but they must cruelly put to death the *Lord of life and glory*.

Yet when they had thus carried on the cruel tragedy; and when, if we were to make judgment of their case from their wicked proceeding, there was nothing that they could expect but vengeance; even here, in one of the greatest affronts to the supreme Majesty of heaven, mercy prevails over justice, and causes the most inhumane actions to become subservient to the best of ends: God accepts this death of his Son as a sacrifice for sin, and has declared his acceptance of all true penitent believers, upon the most kind and gracious terms. This wonderful instance of divine grace is the purport of the text on which I have now chosen to discourse. The apostle, writing to the *Ephesian* converts, does, in the beginning of the epistle, congratulate their happiness that they were, through the goodness of God, called and invited to partake of those glorious privileges to which the gospel of Christ entitled them; *chap. i. ver. 3, 4, 5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise and glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: In whom we have redemption through*

through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

In the beginning of the chapter, of which my text is a part, in order to magnify the goodness and love of God, he puts them in mind of their miserable state and condition before their conversion to christianity; *who were* (says he) *dead in trespasses and sins*; that is, so overwhelmed in corruption, as to be lost to all the true purposes of religion. He refers to the habitual vicious practices, which are more particularly expressed *chap. iv. 18, 19. Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them; who being past feeling*, (which denotes a state of the greatest stupidity) *had given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness*. This was the state of numberless Gentiles; and the apostle tells these converts, *chap. ii. 2. that in times past they had walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which then worked in the children of disobedience*. By the *prince of the power of the air*, is generally understood the devil: And as the Gentile world revolted from the worship of the one true God, which the light of nature was abundantly sufficient to discover; and *when they knew God, glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*; in this state of apostasy and revolt from God, they became professed vassals and subjects of the devil, to whom they paid homage, obedience, and worship.*

The apostle still reminds the *Ephesians* of their former deplorable state, by putting them in mind,
ver.

* See the learned Mr. *Locke* in his notes on this verse.

ver. 3. that *among those* unhappy people he had just been describing, *they also had their conversation in times past, in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others*; that is, as other *Gentiles* were. It needs only to be observed, for the right understanding of these words, that *being by nature children of wrath*, cannot be understood that they were created so by an infinitely wise and good God; this being every way inconsistent with his being and perfections to make any of his rational creatures the objects of his displeasure; this, above all things, be far from him. But *being by nature the children of wrath*, must be understood of their habituating themselves in those vices before their conversion to christianity, which were abomination in the sight of God.

Now the apostle's putting the *Gentiles* in mind of their former state, was of great use to magnify the goodness and free grace of God to them, which he had mentioned in the beginning of the preceding chapter; this he now resumes in the words of my text: *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were DEAD IN SINS, hath quickned us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.* In which words he particularly recommends the goodness and mercy of God to them; that when they *were dead in sins*, being under the power and dominion of them, slaves to satan, and, by an habitual corruption, *children of wrath*, and entirely lost to all the purposes of a truly religious life; yet while they were in this deplorable state, God sent his Son into the world, and by his ministry called them to be his church and people; who wonderfully dispelled that darkness, ignorance, and superstition, which so much abounded among them;

them; and set before them, in a true light, the terms and conditions on which he would, for the future, pardon and accept of all repenting and returning sinners; and, moreover, by the death of his Son, redeemed them from their lost and undone state and condition, and raised them to the hopes of pardon and salvation. This is the purport of the former part of the text. It is added, *By grace ye are saved*; that is, there was nothing in you that could any way merit the divine favour; no, God was moved only by his own goodness to take compassion of your fallen and corrupted state; and by the interposition of his own Son, happily prevented your eternal ruin.

Having considered the design and connection of the words, I shall now proceed, in further discoursing on them, to observe the following method.

- I. I will take a view of the deplorable state of mankind before the coming of Christ into the world; *Ye were dead in sins.*
- II. I shall consider the unspeakable love of God to men, in sending his own Son into the world for their redemption and salvation; *God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickned us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved.)*
- III. I will consider, as some proper uses from the whole, what returns it becomes rational creatures to make to so good and so beneficent a being, for the favours which, in his boundless goodness, he has conferred upon us.

I. I am

I. I am to take a view of the deplorable state of mankind before the coming of Christ into the world; *Ye were dead in sins.*

If we look backward on the state and circumstances of the world soon after the flood, we shall find that mankind began to degenerate from the worship of the one true God and Lord of the universe, although they had so lately heard, if not seen, the most stupendous instances of his divine power and providence, in the government of the world; by his destroying of mankind for their wicked and licentious practices by a universal deluge. Yet such was the proneness of men to vice and idolatry, tho' they could not well be insensible what a desolation and ruin God had brought upon their forefathers, for departing from the true worship of God, and for their profaneness and irreligion; that they ventured upon the like enormous practices, and therewith corrupted their lives and manners. Nevertheless it pleased God to raise up in this, as well as in almost every age, some eminent persons, as instruments in his hand, for the correcting and reforming of a sinful world; so that he has always left mankind entirely without excuse. Such instruments were *Enoch* and *Noah*, *preachers of righteousness* to the old world: And after the earth became peopled again, it pleased God to raise up *Abraham*, a man very remarkable for his trust and dependance on the one only true God; and just *Lot*, *whose righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation* of the wicked people of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*; whom God, in just judgment for their unnatural crimes, destroyed with an utter overthrow, or miraculous destruction, *making them an example to those that should afterward live ungodly*, 2 Pet. ii. 6. Yet notwithstanding these remarkable instances of the judgments
of

of God, the supreme being, who delights in the happiness of his creatures, was willing to put a stop to so growing an evil. To this end he chuses *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, and tries him in a very remarkable manner, in order to prove his fidelity, by commanding him to offer up his own son in sacrifice. *Abraham*, as an undeniable evidence of his faith and trust in God, is ready to comply with the divine command, not doubting but that he who gave him this son, his only son *Isaac*, (and this too at a time when it was impossible, to all appearance, that he should have children) was able to fulfil the promise which he had made, that *in this son all the nations of the earth should be blessed*. But God having had sufficient evidence of the sincerity of his faith, prevented his slaying *Isaac*, by the voice of an angel, calling to him out of heaven, and saying, *Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, since thou hast not with-held thy son, thine only son, from me*, Gen. xxii. 12.* It deserves to be observed, that the supreme Being, having, as before related, had sufficient evidence of *Abraham's* faith, as a reward of his obedience, promised, with an oath, *Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not with-held thy son, thine only son, in blessing, I will blessing thee; and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore: And concluded with a promise, In thy seed shall all na-*

B tions

* Whoever is desirous of seeing more to this effect, may consult bishop *Patrick's* commentary on this passage; and Dr. *Hunt's* essays for explaining scripture revelation, p. 100. and at page 267, 268. and onward, where the case at large of God's trying of *Abraham* in this extraordinary manner, contrary to a prior law, is particularly vindicated, against the objections usually made to *Abraham's* proceeding.

10 *A SERMON preached at Chatham,
tions of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed
my voice.*

Let us now a little consider the wise and good ends God, in the government of the world, might have in view in this particular tryal of *Abraham*.

Idolatry had spread itself in the world, to the great degeneracy of mankind from the worship of the God of heaven. The supreme Being was willing to put a stop to so prevailing an evil among men; and to this end made choice of *Abraham*, and his posterity, as a singular instance of his favour; and the reason of his trying him in so remarkable a manner, seems to have been designed of God, to cause his belief in him, and his trust and dependance on him, to become remarkable in the world, in order to cure the growing evil of idolatry, and to establish his worship among men. This will abundantly vindicate the divine proceeding in separating the posterity of *Abraham* from the rest of mankind, by bringing them out of *Egypt* with a high hand, and a stretched out arm; in doing many miraculous works in favour of that people, sufficient, one would have thought, to have banished idolatry out of the world; particularly his bringing them thro' the *Red-Sea* as on dry land, while their enemies, pursuing them, were entirely destroyed. Not long after this he gave them particular laws and customs, in order to maintain among them the knowledge and worship of the one true God, and adapted them to their then present state and circumstances, in order to prevent their degeneracy by the influence of an idolatrous people. He at length brought them into the good land of *Canaan*, which he had promised to their forefathers, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and subdued their enemies before them; settled them in peace and safety; continued giving them
sufficient

sufficient testimonies of his providential care and government over them.

These remarkable deliverances which God had wrought out for them, were abundantly sufficient to have imprinted upon their minds lasting impressions, not only of his almighty power, but of his providential care and government over them: But, alas! what was the effect? They were perpetually murmuring against God, and distrusting his providence: Their behaviour in the wilderness is surprising. God had, by a number of very wonderful works, delivered them from the *Egyptian* bondage and idolatry, and had *guided them through the wilderness like a flock*, till he brought them into the good land of *Canaan*. These wonderful instances of the power and goodness of God manifested to this people, are well described, *Psal. lxxviii. 13, 14.* and onward: *Marvellous things did God in the sight of their forefathers, in the land of Egypt, and in the field of Zoan; he divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand on heaps, in the day also he led them with a cloud, and all night long with a light of fire; he clave the rock in the wilderness, and gave them drink, as out of the great depth; he brought streams also out of the rocks, and caused the waters to run down like rivers: Ver. 23. He commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven; he rained down manna upon them to eat; and feathered fowls as the sand of the sea; he let it fall into the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.* Yet for all these instances of the goodness of God, the *Psalmist* assures us, *ver. 17, 18. They sinned yet more against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness; they tempted God in their hearts, by asking meat for their lust; yea, they spake against God, and said, Can God furnish a table*

in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; but can he give bread also? or can he provide flesh for his people? And when it pleased God to shew forth his displeasure against Israel for their wickedness, and destroyed many of them while the meat was in their mouths, ver. 30. Yet for all this they sinned more still, and believed not his wonderful works; they kept not the covenant of God, but refused to walk in his laws; they forgot his works, and the wonders he had shewed them, ver. 10, 11. They flattered him with their mouths, and lied unto him with their tongues, ver. 36. Their hearts were not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant: But God being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not;---How often did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert? Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the holy One of Israel: They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from their enemies;---but turned back, and dealt unfaithfully; for they provoked him to anger with their graven images.

Such was the unhappy state of this people, tho' they received such undeniable evidences of the most high God's ruling in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and were expressly commanded not to make to themselves any graven image, or any representation of the God of heaven, nor bow down to any such thing, to do worship or adoration to it, they daringly presumed upon the wilful transgression of this positive law of God, and highly provoked him, by building of altars and images, after the manner of the heathen, in their high places; where they worshipped a number of false gods, to the great offence and dishonour of the supreme Majesty of heaven, *Judges x. 6, &c.* For this their wickedness,

wickedness, it pleased God to let them fall into the hands of their enemies, till they became truly sensible of the heinousness of their crime, and were led to intreat the Lord to interpose to deliver them out of their troubles; and when God, in much goodness, delivered them, yet such was their wickedness, that they forsook him, and fell into idolatry again. And when it pleased him to shew his displeasure against them, they began to consider from whence they were fallen: *When God slew them, then they returned and enquired early after him*, Psa. lxxxiv. 34. Yet upon his hearing their cry, and helping them out of their distress, they still, in times of prosperity, forgot their former misery, and fell into the like calamity again: And this seems to have been the unhappy state of this people, till after their return from the *Babylonish* captivity, wherein they were greatly oppressed; which seems to have had the most remarkable influence upon them; for we do not certainly find that they any more revolted from the worship of the true God in any of those instances before described: But yet they strangely corrupted their religion, more strictly adhering to the traditions of men, than to the laws of God; which, when our Saviour came upon earth, he very sharply reprov'd. They were very exact in some external ceremonies and customs of their religion, while they neglected the more *weighty matters of the law*, such as *judgment, mercy, and faith*.

Having given you some remarkable instances of the goodness of God in dealing with this people, and their ungrateful behaviour, and unhappy state; let us now proceed to consider the circumstances of the *Gentile* world, and we shall find that they were in a most deplorable condition: They seem to have almost

almost wholly extinguished the light of nature and reason, which were sufficient of themselves, if rightly improved, to have led them to the knowledge and worship of the one true God; but they departed from this, and gave themselves wholly up to idolatry. They seem very early to have paid adoration to the sun, moon, and stars; which tho' indeed the most glorious parts of the universe, and instruments in the hand of God for conveying numerous benefits to mankind, yet they were wholly inexcusable in worshipping them; because reason itself was sufficient to have led them to the knowledge and worship of the one only true God, the great creator of these and all other parts of the universe: For, as *St. Paul* assures us, *the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.* But when they had once suffered this natural knowledge of God to be corrupted, and had, as *St. Paul* tells us, *changed the glory of God into a lie; they worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is God blessed for ever!* “ And whereas
 “ some paid adoration to the sun, moon, and stars,
 “ because of their beauty and usefulness; so others,
 “ carried away with flattery to their kings and go-
 “ vernours, deified and worshipped, after their
 “ deaths, many of their remarkable men who had
 “ been benefactors to their country.” This latter, says a learned and eminent writer,* “ was the ido-
 “ latry of the antient *Greeks* and *Romans*; those
 “ learned nations, who, in all other respects, im-
 “ proved and civilized themselves to such a degree,
 “ and cultivated all arts and sciences to so high a
 “ pitch, that all countries in the world, in compa-
 “ rison of them, were stiled, and justly accounted,
 “ barbarous:

* *Dr. Samuel Clarke's Sermon on the unity of God, vol. i. p. 50.*

“ barbarous : But their religion, these learned and
“ famous people received, in the blindest and in the
“ most stupid manner, from their ignorant and bar-
“ barous ancestors ; their *Jupiter* himself, the ob-
“ ject of their most solemn worship, was no other
“ than a king, who, in the ancient, dark, and fa-
“ bulous ages, reigned in the isle of *Crete*.” But God
Almighty being possessed of infinite power, majesty,
and glory, and being every where present, so that
even the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, it was
great weakness for men to worship, even heaven it-
self, instead of the divine Being who placed his
throne there ; since *he made the world, and all things
that are therein, and giveth to all life, and breath,
and all things*, it was prodigious folly to conceive
that *the godhead was like to gold or silver, graven by
art or man’s device*. But most inexcusable still was
it, for men to debase themselves so far, as to worship
the images of creatures beneath their own rank :
And, therefore, with regard to these two last parti-
culars, the apostle justly reproaches the *Gentiles*,
that *when they knew God, they glorified him not as
God, but became vain in their imaginations, and
their foolish heart was darkened : Professing them-
selves to be wise, they became fools ; and changed the
glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made
like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed
beasts, and creeping things*, Rom. i. 21, 22. What-
ever temptation there might be in a time of stupid
ignorance and darkness for paying an undue respect
to the sun, moon, and stars, those glorious lumi-
naries, which are the means of conveying such nu-
merous blessings to us ; yet *the changing the glory
of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to
corruptible man, and to birds, and beasts, and creep-
ing things*, is so very absurd, that it is wholly inex-
cusable.

cusable. It argues such a degree of blindness and stupidity, that one could hardly believe that men should so far debase themselves, did not sacred history, as well as profane, afford us undeniable evidences. *Moses* informs us, that even the *Jews* themselves, in the wilderness, *made them a molten calf, and worshipped it, and said, These be thy Gods that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt : --- And they proclaimed a feast unto it, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings ; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play*, *Exod. xxxii. 4, 5, 6.* And in the first book of *Kings*, the sacred historian gives us an account of the extreme folly and madness of the children of *Israel* in worshipping an idol, called by the name of *Baal* ; which is generally thought to be designed to represent *Belus*, an antient king of *Assyria*, whose worship *Abab* had established in opposition to the adoration of the God of heaven. ----- And 'tis concerning this idol, that *Elijah* so confounded the children of *Israel*, by persuading them, that *the God who answered by fire should be God*. They were so infatuated in the belief that *Baal* would assist them, (though nothing but a lifeless image) that they concluded to put it upon the issue according as *Elijah* had said : But to their great surprize and terrour, they found themselves miserably deceived ; and yet were so stupid, that they cried out aloud from morning until noon ; and when he refused to answer, they were so vexed and terrified, that *they cut themselves till the blood gushed out*, *1 Kings xviii. 22---40.* In order to manifest the true God among this people, (as this gave a favourable opportunity, when they found themselves so miserably deceived in their own) *Elijah* called upon the name of the Lord God of heaven, and intreated him to appear, in a remarkable manner

ner, to convince this stupid people of their great folly. And when God had answered *Elijah's* request in a miraculous manner, by fire from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, it had indeed, for the present, the desired effect, and *they cried out, The Lord he is God! The Lord he is God!* As to the number of Gods, to whom the *Gentile* world paid adoration, and built temples, they are too tedious here to mention, being almost infinite.

From what has been already said, we see the unhappy state of mankind before the coming of Christ: They worshipped the host of heaven, deified their deceased kings and benefactors, and represented the supreme being under the likeness of birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. And this was done, not only in the heathen world, but even among a people that had received the most surprising manifestations of the unlimited power of God, concerned in working deliverances for them times without number!

It is proper to observe, that it pleased God, even among the *Gentiles*, now and then, to raise up some wise and good men, who shined as so many *lights in a dark place*; who made it their business to study and practise the duties of natural religion themselves, and taught and exhorted others to do the like. Such a one seems to have been pious *Job*. “Among the *Greeks*, *Socrates* seems to have been “an extraordinary example.* After him *Plato*, “*Aristotle*, and others.” Among the *Romans*, *Cicero*, and several others, too tedious here to mention; who gave to the world admirable systems of morality: So that it may be very justly supposed, that these men were raised up, and designed by providence,

C

* See what *Plato* says in his *Apology*, as translated by Dr. *Samuel Clarke*. *Boyle's lectures*, p. 284, 285. last edition.

dence, to be instruments in the hand of God, in reproving and putting a check to the extreme superstition and wickedness which abounded in the nations wherein they lived. Yet notwithstanding all these assistances and instructions of the greatest philosophers in the heathen world, they were never able to reform any considerable part of mankind: Their philosophy proved ineffectual to recover them from their absurd and unnatural idolatry, or to bring them to the acknowledgement and worship of the one true God.---So small was the influence which they gained upon the minds of men, even with respect to justice and equity, 'that very few were just and equitable upon right principles: On the contrary, intemperance, luxury, and unnatural uncleanness, were commonly practised even in the most civilized countries.' This was the miserable state of our idolatrous forefathers, that even the wisest among them were ignorant of things of the greatest importance: How, or in what manner, God would be acceptably worshipped, they knew not; neither upon what terms mankind might be received to the favour of a justly offended God. Such was their corrupted state in the great *Socrates's* time, that he confessed his weakness and insufficiency to reform mankind: "Ye may even give over," *says he*, * all hopes of reforming mens manners for the future, unless God be pleased to send you some other instructor." And *Plato*, to the same effect: "Whatever is set right in the present evil state of the world, can be only so by the particular interposition of God."

Having thus at large described the deplorable state of mankind before the coming of Christ into the world, it appears from the whole they were, by
a fit

* *Dr. Samuel Clarke's Boyle's lectures, p. 308.*

a fit emblem, described by the apostle as *dead in sins*; that is, overwhelmed in corruption by a wilful degeneracy and apostasy from God; they were *dead* to all the purposes of religion. The emblem which the apostle uses, very fitly represents their case: For although every habitual sinner, in a natural sense, is alive, when the organs of his body regularly perform their several offices; yet, in a moral sense, he is *dead*. This the apostle affirms, speaking of persons who indulge sensual affections, that they are *dead while they live*. Sin is as certain a destruction of the soul, as diseases are of the body: For as the natural health of the body consists in the several parts thereof regularly performing their respective offices; so, on the contrary, when any of these are interrupted in their courses, there generally ensues sickness, pain, and the like, and at last death itself. So likewise with regard to the soul, when our intelligent faculties are employed in their proper business, pursuing the end they were principally designed for, even to bring glory to God, then only are our minds fitted for all the operations of divine grace to have their proper influence upon them. But, on the other hand, the abuse of these noble powers, which God gave us for wise and good ends, is a disease and the sickness of the soul. And, in like manner, as the body, when brought into an utter incapacity for all its natural uses and purposes, dies, and is dissolved into its primitive dust; so we, in our moral capacities, by an habitual corruption of those excellent faculties of the soul, become, as the text expresses it, *dead in sins*. This had been the case of the *Ephesian* church; yet when they were in this deplorable state, *God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved them*, says the apostle, *even when they were dead in sins*,

20 *A SERMON preached at Chatham,*
quickned them together with Christ. And the same
might justly be said concerning all those of the
Gentile world to whom the grace of the gospel is
made known.

It abundantly appears from what has been said
concerning the state and circumstances of mankind,
that there was nothing in us that could any way pre-
vail with God to shew us so great a favour, as the
sending his only-begotten Son into the world that
we, who were dead in trespasses and sins, might
live through him. This must proceed alone from
his infinite goodness; he commiserated our case,
he considered we were but dust; and his mercy
and compassion has happily prevented our eternal
ruin! This brings us to consider,

II. The unspeakable love of God to mankind,
in sending his own Son into the world for our re-
demption and salvation! *God, who is rich in mercy,*
for his great love wherewith he loved us;---when we
were DEAD IN SINS, hath quickned us together with
Christ.

The great God is possessed of all perfections,
which are the just ground of our adoration and
honour; yet that which more immediately endears
the divine Being to us, is this glorious attribute of
goodness, which is distinguished in the text by the
terms of *mercy* and *love*. “ ’Tis GOODNESS that
“ finishes the idea we have of GOD; and re-
“ presents him to us under the lovely character of
“ being the best, as well as the greatest being in
“ the universe.” This is that glorious attribute
which is in itself infinitely amiable, and which so
displayed itself in all the other perfections of the di-
vine nature, that it causes every one of them to be-
come the object of our love as well as of our adora-
tion.

tion. How great then is our happiness, that we are under the government of so good and gracious a God; whose goodness is invested with supreme dominion, and tempers the rigour of unrelenting justice. He is the inexhaustible fountain of beneficence, from whence the whole frame of nature derives its being; by which all creatures in the universe are continually supported and preserved, and from which we derive all our present enjoyments and our future hopes! This is the darling attribute which the supreme Being delights to describe himself by, and which seems to have put him upon reconciling mercy with justice! His mercy and compassion towards a lost world, happily prevented our ruin and destruction, we being by an universal corruption lost in sin, and utterly fallen short of the glory of God. The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort and consolation, was moved, by his own internal goodness and compassion, to shew forth his mercy to fallen man; and, in order to prevent our eternal misery, sent his only-begotten Son into a sinful world, that he might reform the lives and manners of men, *redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* And how great was the condescension of our dear Redeemer and lover of souls, that he should so voluntarily quit the glories of heaven for our sakes! He who was unspeakably happy in the bosom of his father, as a manifestation of his love to us, in great humiliation took upon him our nature, and became man, and submitted to the lowest state and condition of life upon earth, where he reserved not so much as a place to lay his head. If we trace his life from the manger to the cross, we shall find that he met with innumerable difficulties, and very base treatment

treatment from the hands of wicked men: Yet, notwithstanding this, he continually *went about doing good*, both to the souls and bodies of men. As to their bodies, he healed many that were sick and diseased, cured the blind and deaf, and caused the lame to walk upright: As to their souls, he taught and instructed them in the great points of duty both towards God and man: He laboured to recover among men the sacred worship due to the one true God of heaven! He particularly instructed men in those points of duty which are of the highest importance, and enforced the practice of them with the promise of great and eternal rewards in a life to come; and threatned the disobedient impenitent sinners, with *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*. And having finished the business which he came down upon earth to do, labouring daily to recover mankind out of their universal degeneracy, by establishing the true worship of God in the world, and teaching men their necessary and indispensable duty; and shewing them the absolute necessity of repenting and reforming, in order to their acceptance with God: And having sufficiently instructed the children of men in the truth of his pure and uncorrupted doctrine, and given them the most undeniable evidences of his divine mission, by the greatness and number of his miracles, which he wrought in confirmation of it, he at last laid down his life a sacrifice for sin, and sealed the testimony of his doctrine with his own blood. But after this, as another evidence of his divine mission, he rose again from the dead, according to his own prediction, and ascended into heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for us: *Wherefore, says the apostle to the Hebrews, chap. vii. 25. he is able to save to the utmost all that*
come

come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. These are some of the most undeniable evidences of Christ's love to us, as well as a confirmation of the truth of his doctrine. But it does not cease here; the design of his gospel was to be universal; this was his commission to his disciples, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*; that is, to every rational creature; *he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*; that is, he who believeth the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and enters into an obligation to die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life, (of which things baptism is a fit emblem, by the person's being immersed in water, and raised up again) and continues to live suitably to his christian profession, by abiding in all those graces and virtues which are the excellencies of the gospel, such shall, through the merits of that one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, be eternally saved. And as this is a most certain evidence of Christ's love to us, in thus dying to procure eternal salvation for us; so it is also a most astonishing instance of the love and goodness of God, to point out this way and means for our happiness, to give his own Son to die for the sins of men, and to declare his acceptance of his death as a sacrifice for sin, and a sufficient vindication of his holy and righteous laws, which had been violated by the sins of men.

It became necessary in the wisdom of government, that God should shew forth his displeasure against sin; and upon Christ's thus interposing between the sinner and an offended God, and laying down his life a ransom for us, God was pleased to accept of his death as a *propitiation for the sins of the world*. This seems, indeed, to have been an agreement between the Father and Son; the Father of mercies was inclined and willing to shew forth his

his love to men; but at the same time it became him, as the all-wise governor of the world, to shew also his displeasure against sin. The Son was willing to give his life a ransom for the world, and the Father declared his readiness to accept of it, as a sacrifice for the sins of all those who should be prevailed on to repent, amend, and reform; and has declared his readiness to receive to his favour every repenting and returning sinner, upon the gracious and merciful terms of the gospel covenant.

This is such an instance of love and mercy, as cannot be parallel'd, nor sufficiently entertain'd with joy and thankfulness. We shall always stand in want of words suitably to praise and adore the goodness of God in sending, and the readiness and willingness of our dear Redeemer to be sent, as a propitiation for sin; *Lo I come to do thy will, O God*, was a prophetic description of his readiness to obey the will of his Father. We might very justly have expected, that God would have sent his Son to take vengeance on a sinful world for its rebellion against him, in trampling under feet his laws, and despising his sovereignty and dominion over them: *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickned us together with Christ. By quickning us together with Christ*, must be understood his renewing of our natures by affording us all necessary means for the mortifying our lust and corruption, which had a natural tendency to draw our souls to worldly gratifications: He has restored us, by the life and doctrine of Christ, from the utter incapacity which we were in to all the true purposes of religion: He has *quickned us together with him*, by destroying the power and dominion of sin, that we should not serve it in the lust thereof.

Christ

Christ has, by the appointment of God, conquered death, and led captive the king of terrors; has assured us of our resurrection by his own; he has happily *brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*, and has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; has assured us of a future state of happiness, and life eternal, in the enjoyment of the favour of God, *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore*. This is the blessed and happy effect of our dear Redeemer's incarnation, of his ministering to us, and suffering for us; which ought to kindle in the breast of every rational creature, to whom it is made known, such ardent affections for him, and desires after him, as should cause us to abandon every appearance of evil. In a word, we should be continually endeavouring, not only to hate and abandon sin, but to promote his interest in the world, by a life of virtue and true godliness, from the consideration that *Christ has so loved us as to give himself for us*.

I am sensible that from some particular passages of scripture, wherein God is represented as declaring his abhorrence of men for their sins, some have been led to entertain a very different conception of the supreme Being from what I have given; and have represented him as though he was not of himself inclined to be propitious to his creatures, till Christ interposed and made satisfaction to his divine justice: But if we seriously consider, we shall soon find that this will terminate in a very dishonourable representation of Almighty God: It is a representing him as stern and inflexible, and insisting upon a strict and rigorous satisfaction to his

D

justice,

justice, and acting as though he was void of the goodness, mercy, and love with which our text informs us he abounds; *God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, at the greatest distance from him, by the evil and demerit of sin, yet he, in great compassion, hath quickned us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.*

As this is a matter of great importance, so it deserves to be considered with the greatest seriousness and care. I must acknowledge that it may seem to be a pious extolling of the love of our Redeemer, and the exceeding greatness of the work which he undertook, in order to redeem mankind from death and misery everlasting, to represent the severity of the justice of an incensed God, and to describe him as exacting a strict and rigorous satisfaction for sin, and no ways inclined to be merciful to his perishing creatures, till prevailed upon by the meritorious death and sufferings of Christ: I say, this at first sight may appear to be exalting the greatness of the love of Christ, and the dignity of his merit; which things can never be too much magnified in a consistent manner: But let us take care that we do not represent God as insisting and acting in the exercise of some one perfection, in such a manner as confounds and destroys another; for by this means, while we are contending for his justice being satisfied, we shall divest him of goodness, mercy, and compassion. We ought then seriously to consider, that it is no less injurious to religion to diminish the original goodness and compassion of the Father of mercies, than 'tis pious to be worthily sensible of the greatness of the redemption

tion purchased by the blood of Christ. We ought indeed, and 'tis what highly becomes us as christians, to exalt and magnify the exceeding greatness of the love of our Redeemer in dying for our sins; but at the same time it as highly becomes us to adore the goodness and love of God in sending his Son to die for that end, and in accepting of his death as a sacrifice for sin.

To give but one instance more: the justice of God may seem at first sight to be greatly magnified, by supposing that it requires an absolute necessity either of inflicting an infinite punishment, or of demanding an infinite satisfaction: But let us consider, that by thus representing the case, we leave no room for goodness and mercy to be exercised, and divest Almighty God of that perfection in which he chiefly delights. The sacred scriptures seem constantly to speak of the sufferings of Christ as the means freely appointed, and freely accepted, by the mere goodness and mercy of God, and not as an adequate atonement which made our pardon due by any claim of right that we can pretend to plead that we have a title to. On the contrary, 'tis alone of the free grace and favour of God, both to appoint and accept of Christ's death as a propitiation for the sins of the world.

From hence we learn then, that the deliverance which Christ has wrought out for us, is to be ascribed both to the love of Christ, who freely and voluntarily gave his life a ransom for us; and to the original love and goodness of God, who was pleased to appoint this method of shewing forth his displeasure against sin, and to accept of the death of his Son as an atonement for it. So that God,

who abounds with goodness, mercy, and love, has declared himself ready to accept of all returning sinners, upon their true repentance and real amendment of life, which are the terms proposed by the gospel covenant, and sealed by the blood of Christ. Besides, the death of our Lord and Saviour in itself, is an undeniable evidence of God the Father's original goodness and love to men; that rather than the whole rational creation should perish for want of a Saviour, he in compassion to us sent his own Son into the world to die for us, *that he might put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* The love of Christ then must be allowed to be the mediating cause between God and man; who voluntarily laid down his life to save ours! But GOD'S GOODNESS and LOVE were antecedent to this; he was originally inclined to be merciful to his creatures, and his compassion moved him to send his Son into the world to restore us to happiness, and give us the prospect of life eternal! The inspired writers of the new testament seem constantly to urge the goodness of God as the grand motive and argument to excite us to make suitable returns of love and obedience to him. *St. Paul*, in his epistle to the *Romans*, chap. v. 5. as an instance of this, tells the *Roman* converts, *that the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts;* and adds the effect of God's love: *For when ye were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* And in his second epistle to the *Corinthians*, chap. v. 18. he represents God the Father not only as consenting to our redemption by Christ as the author of it, but supposes it to derive its original from God: *All things are of God,*

God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ our Lord. In the words of our text he, with great propriety of speech, expresses the happy state of the *Ephesian* church, as wholly owing to the boundless goodness and favour of God. He had been just before representing their corrupted state as utterly fallen short of the glory of God, they being *dead in sins*: But here, in order to magnify his goodness and love, he breaks out into a kind of rapture of admiration; BUT GOD, (says he) *who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickned us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved*; that is, it was alone of the favour of God, that they were put into so happy a state. At *chap. i. ver. 5.* and onward, the same thing is still further illustrated: *Having predestinated you to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise and glory of his grace, who hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we hath redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; and having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to the good pleasure which he purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together all things in Christ.* The scripture abounds with instances of this kind, signifying that the coming of Christ into the world for the redemption of mankind, was wholly owing to the original love, and essential goodness of God the Father. *2 Thess. ii. 13. We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren,*

brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. And the apostle John affirms the same thing, 1 epist. chap. iii. ver. 1. Behold, (says he) what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Ver. 16. Hereby (says he) we perceive the love of God towards us, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him: Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And our Lord himself still more expressly affirms, That God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Having mentioned the deplorable state and condition of mankind antecedent to our redemption by Christ, and ascribed that redemption to the original and essential goodness of God the Father, and not to any merit of our own, that could any way excite the divine Being to bestow so great a favour upon us, we being, as I have at large shewn, *dead in sins*, and overwhelmed in corruption; the apostle might well say, in the last words of my text, *by grace ye are saved*. The infinite and eternal God was moved by his own bowels of compassion to commiserate our case, and send his only-begotten Son to redeem a lost world! O love immense! O goodness beyond conception! Limited by nothing, but infinite and unerring wisdom! Well might the apostle break out into an extasy of admiration, *But God, who is rich in mercy*; that is, who is possessed of infinite and
unbounded

unbounded goodness *for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickned us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.* I proceed now,

III. To consider, as some proper uses from the whole, what returns become rational creatures to make to so good and so beneficent a being for the favours which he, in his boundless goodness, hath bestowed upon us.

And then, has God Almighty delivered us out of the deplorable condition which I have at large described, and this by so singular an instance, as the *sending of his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him?* Certainly then it is the least that we can do, in return to God for this so inestimable a favour, to set about the great business of reforming our lives and manners, which was one great end of our blessed Redeemer's incarnation and sufferings. And for us to act otherwise, will argue the highest ingratitude both to God and Christ. For men to go on in a careless state of negligence and insensibility, is an evidence that they are still, as the text expresses it, *dead in sins*, and lost in corruption. O unhappy state! miserable, past remedy! Because *life and immortality are now brought to light*, and set before us in the clearest manner, and there are none of us that can well be ignorant of the great and important duties of religion: We must therefore be infinitely more inexcusable than our idolatrous forefathers, who, 'tis more than probable, had they enjoyed the blessed advantages for knowing the mind of God which we possess, in a religion which has all the
marks

marks and evidences of coming from him, they would, with the greatest thankfulness, have embraced it; especially if we take their own account of the necessity which some of their greatest men saw of God's interposing for the deliverance of mankind: So that our misery must consequently be so much the greater, as we fall from so much the more exalted means of being made happy. Besides, it is the greatest affront imaginable to the great author of our beings, and the wise disposer of all events, for us to neglect embracing so great a deliverance as God, in his infinite goodness, has proposed to us. Let us then rouse our selves out of this spiritual lethargy, and remember that God has made us rational creatures, and therefore it will be our highest wisdom, as well as happiness both here and hereafter, (and what is justly expected from us as reasonable beings) to exert those noble powers which God has implanted in our natures in endeavouring to promote the glory of God, and the interest of Christ's kingdom, by a life of virtue and true godliness, continually labouring *to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*. This indeed will be highly becoming our profession as christians, and will be acting as rational creatures, duly sensible of the favours and mercies which we enjoy, and which flow alone from the free bounty of an infinitely wise, good, and gracious God.

But, *2dly*, has God, in his infinite love to men, sent his Son to die for our sins, and hereby declared his merciful acceptance of our pious and sincere endeavours after a holy and righteous life, as the terms on which he will, for the future, pardon and accept of his guilty creatures? Let us then, as
reasonable

reasonable beings, desirous of happiness, *abstain from every appearance of evil; let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the christian race set before us: Let us give all diligence, to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and charity, well knowing that, if we do these things, we shall never fall, but shall have ground to apply to ourselves the blessed assurance of having an entrance administred unto us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

But, 3dly, Our obligations to make these returns to God for the favours which we enjoy, are exceedingly heightened when we look backward, and reflect upon our past degenerate state. There was nothing that could excite the divine compassion but our misery: For we were, according to the expression of an eminent divine, “ Rebels and enemies to God by wicked works, “ and up in arms against heaven, and at open “ defiance with our maker.” Yet such was his mercy and compassion, as to send his own Son into the world to offer us terms of peace and reconciliation upon our repentance and amendment of life: And this was done freely and voluntarily, out of his own innate goodness; there was no necessity of God’s interposing, with any views to add to his own infinite and unspeakable happiness: No! he would have been transcendently happy, though we had remained unspeakably miserable. *Man can no ways be profitable to God; as he that is wise may be profitable to himself.*

E

self. But though this be undeniably true, that we can no ways add to the happiness of God, yet let us remember that there is something, of very great importance, for us to do, if ever we expect to be made happy in a future state; and this is to be sincerely reforming our own lives and manners by the practice of all virtue and righteousness of life; *for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* It is this that must prepare our minds for the enjoyment of that kingdom of glory and blessedness, into which nothing shall in any wise enter which defiles, or is an abomination in the sight of God. For as impossible as it is for the purity of the divine nature to be reconciled to sin, (which is utterly impossible, and which he has given us the most undeniable evidence of in the death of his own Son to atone for it) so certain it is, that no wicked or unregenerate person can, in any wise, enter into the kingdom of heaven. God has, 'tis true, sent his Son to die for our sins, and in our stead, to purchase eternal salvation for us; but it is not possible, nor was it ever designed, that any unreformed or unpurified nature should be thereby made partaker of that salvation. Christ has, 'tis true, done every thing that is necessary on his part; but notwithstanding all this, if we still remain finally impenitent, and refuse all the calls and invitations of his gospel, and will not do what he has absolutely required that we should do for ourselves; if men will still chuse to continue in the service of sin, rather than come forth into the *glorious liberty of the children of God*, they must, notwithstanding all that
Christ

Christ has done for them, utterly perish in their own corruption. It is vain for men to expect the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, while they continue in the practice of sin unrepented of, or live in an open violation of the holy and righteous laws of God. This is a very false and groundless imagination, yet such a one by which, I fear, many deceive themselves, and are ready to think that the vices which they commit, will be looked upon by God, through the merits of Christ, as pardonable infirmities: They are too frequently led by this false imagination, to plead in excuse for themselves and their wickedness, that their natures are weak and frail, and the temptations that ensnare them, are too great for flesh and blood to encounter with; or else that the devil is a subtil adversary, and who can withstand so potent an enemy? Ask the most profligate men, that believe the christian religion, what they think of a future life, and they will tell you that God is merciful, and the merits of Christ are infinite, and therefore they hope to have their sins pardoned, and atoned for through them. But let all such remember, that it is unalterably decreed, that no wicked person shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that if ever they hope or expect to be happy hereafter, they must become obedient to the holy and righteous laws of God here. Religion must not only appear outwardly in our lives and conversations, but it must likewise be seated at the heart, as the center of all our actions; it must be an inward and real disposition of heart and soul, which must shew forth

itself in the real practice of holiness and virtue; in promoting the honour of God, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the good of souls, which are inseparable. Let us then banish those weak excuses we are now ready to make to men like ourselves, for our not becoming truly religious, and remember that they will be no just excuse before the great tribunal of God. He who knoweth the hearts of all men, will not be mocked, nor suffer his righteous laws to be trampled upon; and though he forbears inflicting of the punishment which our sins justly deserve, in order that his goodness may lead us to repentance and renewed obedience; yet in the end he will assuredly punish the impenitent sinner: For St. Paul assures us, *we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* He will appoint to every one according to their respective deserts, when he shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

But, *fourthly and lastly*, As we have been considering the unspeakable love of God in the gift of his Son, whose incarnation we on this day commemorate, may a just sense of the great deliverance which he has wrought out for us, engage us with thankful hearts to praise him, not only with our lips, but with our lives, by de-
voting

voting ourselves more intently to the service of God, in walking before him in all holiness and righteousness of life. We are, blessed be God, at present favoured with the smiles of his providence, in that we enjoy our rights and our privileges to serve the God of heaven in such a manner as we conceive to be most acceptable to him. We are freed from the darkness, ignorance, and superstition, which were spread universally throughout the world, before our blessed Redeemer came upon earth; which he, to our happiness, has graciously expelled; and though corruptions have crept into his own religion, and which he indeed very plainly told would come to pass, by mens being *lovers of themselves more than lovers of God*: Yet, blessed be God, it is our happiness to be freed from the power and authority of men, who impose their weak and traditional doctrines, as of equal authority with the laws of God, and this too upon pain of imprisonment, confiscation of goods, banishment, or death by burning, even in the cruellest manner. How many are the instances which history affords us of the sufferings of our forefathers, in labouring to *maintain a conscience void of offence both towards God and man*? How cruelly have they been persecuted, and that to death, and this too inflicted in the most inhuman manner, by roasting of poor creatures alive at some small distance from the fire; while others have been committed more immediately to the flames till their lives have been extinguished; witness that remarkable place of *Smithfield*, in our own country, where many have been consumed to ashes
by

by burning; and this not only by men usually distinguished by the name of Romanists, but, I am sorry to speak it, Protestants have too far followed their bloody and inhuman cruelty; and this too on men who have been zealous in propagating what they esteemed the cause of God and his truth in the world. Let us learn then from hence suitably to value and prize our own happiness, with which we are favoured under the present Establishment, and be thankful to God whose providence has rescued us out of the hands of those who would sport themselves in our misery. May then a just sense of our duty to God, and love to Christ, excite in our minds how much it becomes us, as christians, to admire the wonderful interposition of the Son of God; and let us, as we are now about to commemorate it, labour *to keep the feast worthily; not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, or in rioting and drunkenness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and sobriety, temperance and truth.* Let us duly remember the dying love of our Saviour, and the great end for which he died; and let us who are persuaded and fully convinced of the truth of Christ's divine mission from heaven, consider what great things he has done for us; who for our sakes, and for our salvation, came down from heaven; and while he was upon earth, made it his great business to instruct mankind into the right and only way to life eternal. Let us remember that it is our duty, and but a proper return to God for the favour which he has bestowed upon us, to be sincerely and heartily setting about the great business

ness that he has indispensably required that we should do for ourselves: Let us labour, by a life of virtue and true religion, to secure to ourselves an interest in the merits of our Redeemer; for without this we are lost and undone for ever! There is nothing but this that can give us peace of conscience here, nor any thing but this can give us assurance of the least degree of happiness hereafter! Let us no longer then remain among the number of the self-deceived, but immediately resolve sincerely to obey the whole will of God, as made known to us in the ever-blessed gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and then we may have good ground to hope for pardon of sin, salvation, and eternal happiness: But we are not to expect it through our own righteousness, which at best is but imperfect, but through the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ: Yet, by our sincere and unfeigned endeavours, through the prevailing intercession of our blessed Redeemer, our sincere, though imperfect, obedience, shall be accepted, through the merits of him, who offered himself a spotless sacrifice on our behalf.

F I N I S.



7 1 7 1 2

